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SUBJECT: ALLIANCE AND USG COORDINATION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A NORTH KOREAN PROVOCATION

Classified By: EAP AA/S Scot Marciel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (S/NF) Our embassies and military commands in the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, and the region need to work closely with host governments and provide consistent public messaging in the event of any further North Korean provocations or threatening actions such as missile launches, nuclear tests, incursions into South Korean territorial waters, maritime or DMZ clashes, or other potentially destabilizing or escalatory actions, to include a Maritime Interdiction Operation (MIO) event. The following guidance should be implemented under the direction of the Chiefs of Mission in Seoul and Tokyo, and in coordination with Commander USPACOM and Commanders at United States Forces Korea (USFK) and United States Forces Japan (USFJ).

[¶2.](#) (S/Rel JA, KS) In the event of a North Korean provocation, Chiefs of Mission in Seoul and Tokyo may, if requested/invited, call on the Blue House/Kantei or the foreign ministries for discussions and to publicly exhibit coordination. In the event of any such North Korean action, Commanders at USFK and USFJ should provide to their ROK and Japanese military counterparts as much real time information as possible about actual physical events and the actual responses of U.S. forces (but NOT/NOT prospective or possible actions or reactions).

[¶3.](#) (S/Rel JA, KS) Either the White House or the Department of State may issue a public statement following a North Korean provocation. Embassies should not/not release press statements absent guidance to do so from the Department of State. Embassies Seoul and Tokyo may respond to on-the-record press inquiries using the pre-cleared language contained in para 7 at any time. Embassies Seoul and Tokyo may also share the points contained in paragraphs 8 and 9 with the ROKG and GOJ in advance of a provocation and recommend that the ROKG/GOJ use the same points in order to ensure a consistent message. Because most actions of this type by North Korea are likely to occur during the day in Seoul and Tokyo (overnight in Washington), to ensure roll out of a coordinated post-provocation message, Embassies Seoul and Tokyo should limit their on-the-record responses to press inquiries using the pre-cleared language contained in paragraphs 8 and 9.

[¶4.](#) (S/Rel JA, KS) In the event of a missile launch, when directed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (OASD) Public Affairs, and in coordination with a post-launch White House or State Department public statement, NORTHCOM will be prepared to issue a press release confirming the launch, as NORTHCOM has the responsibility and capability

within the Defense Department to provide launch characterization.

¶5. (S/Rel JA, KS) Country teams, with the support of the military commands, should make the following general consultative points to counterparts in the ROKG and GOJ as context for coordinating public diplomacy related to a North Korean provocation.

--It is important to avoid creating a crisis atmosphere that will reduce our governments' combined flexibility and give advantage to North Korea's escalatory intentions.

--We understand that North Korea's actions create domestic pressure in your countries to appear responsive. The demands of the news cycle only heighten the pressure. However, we strongly urge you to use public statements as a means to reduce public anxiety and project our combined, bilateral preparedness and emphasize the in-depth cooperation that continues trilaterally with the ROK/Japan.

--We expect that the international response to any North Korean provocation may be addressed, at least in part, in the UN Security Council, particularly to the extent such action constitutes a violation of existing UNSCRs. It would be unwise and potentially counterproductive to speculate publicly on the outcome of our joint efforts there.

--We are very concerned by continued intelligence leaks, which place sources and methods at risk and undermine the unified careful message we have developed together. It is important that our governments not confirm leaked information that appears in the media.

--Each government should refrain from commenting on the plans and activities or characterizing the positions of the other, apart from reinforcing agreed policies and principles.

¶6. (S/Rel JA, KS) U.S. military commands (including PACOM, USFK, USFJ, the Missile Defense Agency, and STRATCOM) should not/not release press statements following any DPRK provocation. As authorized by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Commander PACOM, USFK and USFJ personnel may respond to media questions on background, to explain in general terms, using unclassified information, the extent of U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK information-sharing and military-to-military coordination in advance of and during the provocation.

¶7. (SBU) Preceding any specific provocative act, Embassies Seoul and Tokyo may use the following points to respond to press inquiries. These points are similar to the standing guidance being used by the State Department spokesperson.

--We are closely monitoring North Korea's activities and intentions.

--Through close consultations, the governments of the United States, Republic of Korea, and Japan, in coordination with China and Russia, have attempted to discourage North Korea from taking further provocative actions which could diminish stability and impair relations in the region.

--Any further provocation would only further isolate North Korea from the international community.

--North Korea should focus instead on denuclearization, and on improving its relations with its neighbors.

--Our governments will continue to be in close communication as this situation further develops.

¶8. (S/Rel JA, KS; SBU after provocative action) After North Korea launches a missile, tests a nuclear device, or commits incursions upon South Korean territorial waters or land, Embassies Seoul and Tokyo may draw from the following points in response to press inquiries. All other questions should be referred to Washington.

If asked about North Korea's motives:

--We will not speculate about North Korea's motives.

If asked about North Korean WMD or missile-related proliferation activities:

--We are greatly concerned about North Korea's continued export of ballistic missiles and related equipment, materials, and technologies to countries of concern. North Korean exports of such items violate UNSCR 1718 and UNSCR 1874.

--UNSCR 1874 establishes new procedures, expectations and obligations to counter North Korea's proliferation activities. The U.S. is committed to fully implementing all aspects of this resolution and will do so in close coordination with our international partners.

--North Korea has marketed its missile technology and equipment worldwide.

--The United States has imposed sanctions on North Korean entities multiple times for missile-related transfers, most recently in February 2009.

If asked about the future of the Six-Party Talks:

--The United States remains committed to the Six-Party Talks process, and calls on the DPRK to fulfill its commitments under the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning, at an early date, to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards.

If asked about U.S.-ROK-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation or any other form of operational cooperation:

--The United States, ROK, and Japan have worked closely as alliance partners to better monitor, understand, and respond appropriately to provocative North Korean actions.

If asked about the U.S. commitment to defend (Japan) (the ROK):

-- The United States is prepared to meet fully its obligations under the (U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security) (U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954). Our forces in Korea, Japan, and throughout the region train rigorously to ensure readiness for upholding our treaty obligations.

If asked about the U.S. nuclear umbrella:

--The U.S. maintains its firm commitment to the security of our treaty allies the ROK/Japan, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, an integral part of our extended deterrence.

If asked about the Northern Limit Line:

--The Northern Limit Line (NLL) is intended to prevent maritime incidents, and respecting it serves the best interests of North Korea, South Korea and the region. We urge North Korea to avoid (further) provocative actions with respect to the NLL.

19. (SBU) Regarding Maritime Interdiction Operations, Embassies Seoul and Tokyo may draw from the following standing press guidance in response to press inquiries. All other questions should be referred to Washington.

--The DMZ and the rules that govern it were agreed to by North Korea in the Armistice Agreement in 1953. The DMZ has served North Korea, South Korea and the region well for almost 56 years. North Korea should avoid any (further) provocative actions with respect to the DMZ.

If asked about the Northwest Islands:

--The Northwest Islands (NWI) and the rules that govern them were identified and agreed to by North Korea in the Armistice Agreement in 1953. North Korea should avoid any (further) provocative actions with respect to the NWI.

If asked regarding Maritime Interdiction Operations:

--Exports and proliferation of ballistic missiles and related equipment, materials, and technologies to countries of concern violate UNSCR 1718 and UNSCR 1874.

--As obligated by UNSCR 1874, the U.S. will remain vigilant of any North Korean activities that might contravene the resolution, and we will respond in line with the provisions of the resolution.

--We intend to vigorously enforce these resolutions in all their aspects.

--The military remains ready at all times to defend against threats in the region.

--We cannot comment on any military planning or operations.

End Text of Press Guidance.

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